

CHAPTER  
**19**  
SECTION 1

## Section Summary

### THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT GROWS

In the late twentieth century, Democrats and Republicans were the two major political parties in the United States. Many Democrats were **liberals** who believed that the federal government was responsible for improving the lives of all Americans. They supported social programs, regulation of industry, and international cooperation. Many Republicans were **conservatives**. They believed that private organizations and individuals, instead of the government, should care for the needy. Conservatives also favored tax cuts and supported a strong military.

The conservative movement, also known as the **New Right**, grew quickly during the 1960s and 1970s. The Vietnam War had divided the country, and many Americans had been alienated by the counterculture. Watergate, the oil crises of the 1970s, economic stagnation, and the Iran hostage crisis also weakened support for the government.

Conservatives blamed economic problems on liberal economic policies. They believed the government imposed too many taxes and spent money on the wrong programs. They disliked programs that the federal government required but did not pay for, known as **unfunded mandates**.

Reverend Jerry Falwell founded the **Moral Majority** in 1979, a political organization founded on religious beliefs. Members worried that traditional families were declining. They were also concerned that new freedoms brought by the counterculture would lead to the degeneration of youth.

The conservative movement helped former actor and California governor **Ronald Reagan** unseat President Jimmy Carter in the 1980 election. Reagan's conservative beliefs, charm, and optimism convinced Americans that he would usher in a new era of prosperity and patriotism.

### Review Questions

1. What events contributed to the rise of the New Right?

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2. What were the concerns of the Moral Majority?

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### READING CHECK

What is the term for programs that the federal government requires but does not pay for?

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### VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *degeneration* mean in the underlined sentence? Think about what happens to your health when you are very sick. Which of the following words do you think means the same thing as *degeneration*?

- improve
- decline

### READING SKILL

**Summarize** Describe the differences between the liberal and conservative viewpoints of government.

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